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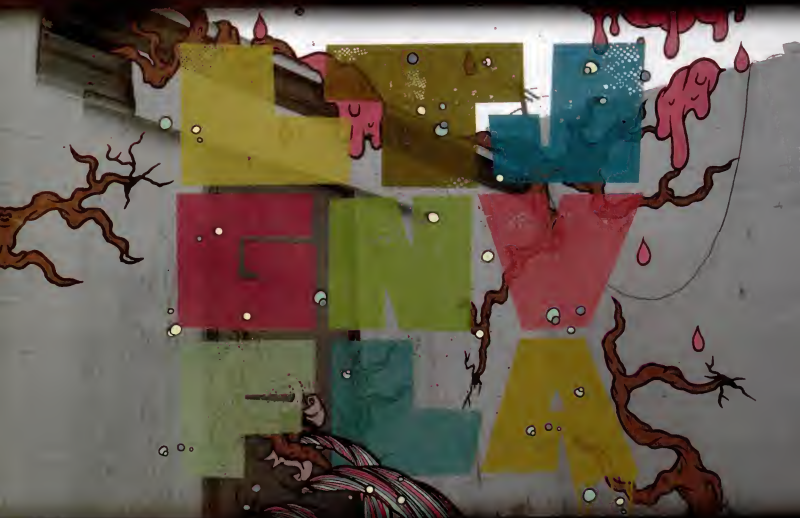


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20 ON THE COVER: DEERHUNTER

Atlanta's noise warriors, Deerhunter, get a little bit less cryptic on their new album *Microcastle*. "It's like the dude in your class that used to carve pentagrams into shit and threaten people, but then they gave him medicine... But you still feel like, 'Wait a minute, this guy is still a little fucked up'" says Bradford Cox, who really has a way with a pull quote.

08 QUICK FIX Practice speaking fake French with Flight Of The Conchords, start a one-band label with Dead Confederate and grab some Girl Talk about Shaquille O'Neal.

12 ON THE VERGE Wintersleep hopes to wake up America, Lykke Li just wants to dance, Japanese Motors catch a wave and Vivian Girls (not their real names).

24 HEARTS&REVOLUTION Their revolution will be mobilized. The boy/girl dance punk duo is touring America in their ice cream truck, handing out toys, candy and disco hand grenades. They also like knives.

26 REPO! THE GENETIC OPERA What do Anthony Stewart Head, Paris Hilton, Ogre and Paul Sorvino have in common? A crude, lewd industrial rock opera and a fantastic soundtrack with enough hooks to snag on some safety-pinned goth fans to get them in theaters.

31 THE SEA

Seriously, how are they the first band to come up with this name? Probably the same way they took what the White Stripes and the Black Keys did before them, gave it a little English boy charm and made it sound like something so fresh and clean on their debut, *Get It Back*.

34 ON THE CD

36 REVIEWS Our tastemakers sample the latest offerings from Deerhoof, Okkervil River, Lee "Scratch" Perry and others, gorge on new photography books covering the New York Dolls and the American hardcore scene, snack on DVDs like *The Beach Boys And The Satan* and eat up reissues from The Replacements, Ego Summit and Johnny Cash.

What's This Song About?

With Flight Of The Conchords'

Bret McKenzie

Interview By Lisa Hresko

ALTHOUGH THEY'RE widely known for their television show depicting hapless Kiwi imports trying to break onto New York's music scene, in reality, folk band-cum-comedy outfit Flight Of The Conchords' Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie are anything but clueless. Their self-titled collection of satirical songs—released on the coveted Sub Pop label, no less—is the stripped down version of the sharp television show of the same name. Dipping their toes into everything from Brit pop to hip-hop, each of the Conchords' well crafted songs boasts its own personality. Bret McKenzie takes a few minutes to explain the deeper meaning behind a few choice tracks.

"Hiphopotamus Vs. Rhymenoceros"

That's just a rap battle between our hip-hop alter egos.

Was that written specifically for the episode "Hiphopotamus Vs. Rhymenoceros?"

No, that's just an old jam from when we invented hip-hop.

"Robot"

Well, that's a vision toward the future when the world is taken over by robots. Most of the voices are us sitting around by ourselves making ourselves sound like robots. I'm a big robot fan. I like fictional robots, the ones that come out of trade fairs. The real robots are really disappointing. I'm more into the ones from science fiction films.

Living United

With Dead Confederate

Interview By Tyler Theofilis

THESE DAYS, IT'S BECOMING more common to see bands digging back into the early '90s for inspiration, but it's still rare to find a band that does it with as much innovation and honesty as Dead Confederate. Combining grungy guitars, 12-minute psych-marathons and the candor of a Co-bain-esque whine, this Augusta-born quintet is ready to set off an audio powderkeg in the musical establishment, thanks in part to some fine production from Mike McCarthy (Spoon, Trail Of Dead). Their new album, *Wrecking Ball*, was released on September 16 by The Artists Organization. Hardy Morris provides the band's pipes and fretwork.

How did you get involved with your label, The Artists Organization?

Hardy Morris: It's run by Gary Gersh, who worked for Geffen for years, and for Nirvana and Sonic Youth. There's this local radio DJ in Bir-

A Comedy Of Errors: (L-R) Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie



"Boom"

"Boom" was a dancehall tune. I bought this cool '80s digital guitar from a shop we have in New Zealand called Cash Converters, which is a pawn shop. It's like a Casiotone but a guitar. I just started messing around with that and we came up with a beat. It's pretty obvious what that's about. It's about the connection between man and a Casiotone.

"Foux Du Fafa"

This was one of our first songs. That's schoolbook French.

What does "Foux Du Fafa" mean exactly?

"Foux Du Fafa" is nonsense. I studied French at school—Jemaine didn't—and it was basically all the French words I could remember. I think there are only a couple of grammatical errors, most of it's pretty good. It's just really simple things like "the swimming pool" and "hello" and "red." "Foux Du Fafa" was just a very French sounding melody.



From Left: (L-R) Walker Howie, Hardy Morris, Jason Scarbott, Brantley Sahn and John Watkins

mingham who used to come see us at this place called The Nick. It's been around since the '70s. It's a pretty awesome little place in the middle of nowhere in Birmingham. [The DJ], Scott Register, kept coming. And unbeknownst to us, he was working with Gary, just kind of scouting the

(Continued on p. 10)

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South for him for The Artists Organization. Scott was coming to our show, and he was picking up Gary from the airport, and he had our CD in the car, and Gary liked it. That's when he took us to dinner. We just ate some tacos, and he told us about everything that's going on, and where we were at. [Then] Gary came over to Nashville and saw us play.

What exactly is The Artists Organization?

HM: We're the only band on the label, I think. Initially, Gary wanted to manage us, and then after he came to our shows, he decided to put out our

record. I think it's really like a management organization, and it just turned into a label really quickly.

There are a few really epic songs on *Wrecking Ball*. What attracts you to longer songs?

HM: Sometimes it takes that much to get the point across, to get the story told, even though sometimes the lyrics are a little abstract. You may not be following the story. Sometimes it takes the next verse to finish the point or fill out the emotion you're trying to relieve in yourself, and get it out of your system.

In My Room

With Gregg Gillis, a.k.a. Girl Talk

Interview by Lotte Agullo-Collins

DESPITE HIS tour-heavy schedule and vagabond "party-boy" image, Gregg Gillis, the man behind Girl Talk, has a real home in Pittsburgh. Furnishings aside, Gregg gave us a snapshot into his world as we discussed music, his new place and coming to terms with adulthood (through decoration).

His new album, *Feed the Animals*, was released digitally in June on a pay-what-you-want basis, but physical copies are available now.

I know that you quit your job as a biomedical engineer this past year. Did you move out of your apartment?

Yeah, actually. I had been in the same apartment for the last three years and it was really a wreck and kind of horrible there. I enjoyed it, but people wouldn't even come hang out over there because it was so tore up and a mess... I actually moved into a new place about a month ago.

And how is the new place? Are you movin' on up?

The new place is sweet. I'm living in a real house now. The only thing is... I'm kind of always travelling a lot, so I have some furniture here, but there's really very little going on. I still have garbage bags hanging on doors rather than garbage cans and my TV sitting on the ground rather than a dresser.

I think we've all been there. So what were the key pieces that came with you?

I threw away every piece of furniture I had, which was like a couch with the springs coming through. I don't have many clothes but I brought what I have clothes-wise, and then I have a whole bunch of Girl Talk concert paraphernalia [from] over the years... Just small things, you know. I have a couple of rats, a few basketballs, a few bandanas [laughs]. I'd say the biggest hassle of moving over here was actually bringing the music collection, which was scattered everywhere. I have mainly CDs—I have vinyl sometimes. I [also] ran a cassette label when I was in high school and I had a car for many years that only had a cassette deck, so I have a pretty sick tape collection.

In terms of decoration, what are you thinking?

I don't know... In my last place it was more dorm room style, so I had posters up of Shaquille O'Neal and *The Crow*, the movie. But now that



Turn on your bright lights: Gregg Gillis

I've moved into a home—I still have those interests, and I still love *The Crow* and Shaquille O'Neal—but it just doesn't seem as fitting here. I have an attic area that's turned into my studio; that's where I have all of my cool posters and things that I really love. The rest of the house I'm going to try to pretend and act like an adult.

2

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Wide Awake in November: (l. to r.) Tim D'Eon, Loel Campbell, Paul Murphy, Nick Bickel and John Sirois

Wintersleep

GIVEN THE CANADIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY'S structural superiority to ours (their government gives grants to bands named Holy Fuck), it's reassuring to know that occasionally our northern neighbors can be as clueless as us yanks. Last April, six years and three albums deep into a career filled with power and beauty, powerful Halifax quintet Wintersleep won a Juno Award for New Group of the Year.

Almost a year after its Canadian release, their dynamic third album, *Welcome To The Night Sky*, is finally available down here. But drummer Loel Campbell won't take it personally if U.S. listeners make the same mistake as Canadian industry types. "If nobody's heard you before, you're brand new to them so there's no way to expect anything else."

Though some groups might be thrown by having such a low profile years into their career, the roots of Wintersleep are set too deep for the members to get rattled. Guitarist Tim D'Eon and singer Paul Murphy were childhood friends in the tiny Nova Scotia town of Yarmouth, and D'Eon helped sneak Campbell into a bar for a show when the drummer was 15 years old.

Though the hit single "Weighty Ghost" made the group more popular than ever in Canada, Wintersleep couldn't find a U.S. record label they trusted. The group eventually decided to release *Welcome* through Labwork (their Canadian label) here, almost a year after its Canadian release. "There were a few different options that we could have pursued to make it come out quicker... but it's just nice to do things on your own," Campbell says, "and not worry about getting fucked over."

As such, D'Eon insists that the group never felt any jealousy over other Canuck groups like Arcade Fire and Broken Social Scene gaining popularity in America while Wintersleep remained relatively unknown. In fact, he says that if they seem like a brand new band to people, he sometimes feels that way himself. "I mean, I'm proud of our first two records, but I feel like this is the first record where we really nailed down what we're all about," he says. "It's just like starting all over again, like we did in Canada, and just trying to build a fan base by touring as much as possible. I'm looking forward to crashing on people's floors and all of that."

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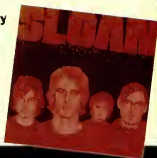
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Motorin': (L-R) Andrew Atkinson, Alex Knost, Chris Vail and Nolan Hall

JAPANESE MOTORS

SURFERS DON'T LIKE SURF MUSIC. Of that much, Japanese Motors singer Alex Knost is certain. "Ninety-nine percent of the surfer population hates the Beach Boys. They think they're cheesy," he says on the phone from his home in Costa Mesa, California. "At a young age, though, I was into corny pop music. I also used to sit around and watch *Happy Days* and *Gidget*." Yet those interests and the fact that Knost may "kind of, but not really" be a professional surfer hasn't led him to try to rewrite the theme to *Hawaii 5-0*. "Single Fins And Safety Pins," from the band's brilliant self-titled debut on Vice, is about the closest he's going to get. "Somebody must have told me to write what I know, still there's more irony writing about surfing being a surfer. It's tongue-in-cheek, but it's the truth so I'm not really lying."

Knost and guitarist Nolan Hall grew up on the beach together (both of their dads were surfers), and began messing around with music during

their teenage years. But it wasn't until a little more than a year ago that Japanese Motors gelled, when bass player Chris Vail and drummer Andrew Atkinson came on board. But Knost and Hall always had the name. "When you're 17 or 18, you're writing it on your skateboard, making fake stickers," explains Knost. "Originally it just looked good to me visually. Also, for a little period, I was into Hanoi Rocks and it was similar, like 'Hanoi Rocks! Japanese Motors!' We had different names, but that one just stuck, and once we started playing shows, we stuck with it ever since."

Despite the band's favorite pastime, the Motors' sound is more akin to the Velvet Underground and other things of that nature. "There's elements of living in California," says Knost. "In music, people like to associate certain things to identify it. It's part of who we all are, but we don't sit around with sand in our ears." STEPHEN SLAYBAUGH

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VIVIAN GIRLS

FOR BROOKLYN'S VIVIAN GIRLS, SUCCESS HAS COME fast and furious. With raving internet reviews spreading like an arcade fire, the band's first self-titled full-length, pressed in a small run of 500 by Mauled By Tigers, sold out within weeks of its release. (And soon after copies were going for top-dollar on eBay.) And, as two out of three members of the girl group gone band tell me, the backlash is already here. "Before, if we'd play a bad show, it was no big deal," says guitarist Cassie Ramone (obviously not her real surname) quizzically. "But now at every show there's someone filming it or reviewing it for a newspaper. And every person wants to be like, 'I'm too good for the hype.' So if you do one thing wrong, people will jump on it."

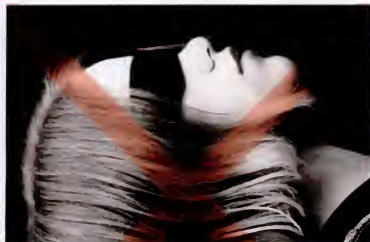
But thus far, the group seems to be doing everything right. Constant touring has kept the band's name in the headlines while they prepare

for their debut's re-release by rock ruckus connoisseur In the Red. "I think this is the only time Larry (head honcho Larry Hardy) has done this," explains bassist Kickball Katy (again, a stage name). "Bought a record off another label. It was cool." Hardy and the bloggers extolling the band's virtues are both right; the record's an impressive melding of pop songs played fast and drenched in Spector-esque ambiance and Jesus and Mary Chain din. Next up, in between dates on the road, the Vivian Girls are working on constructing a handmade package that includes a self-recorded single, and a silk-screened t-shirt and artwork. Along with their many tour dates, there isn't time for much else. "Right now, we don't do anything but band stuff," Katy says. "We applied for a job to paint someone's bedroom on Craigslist, but he never wrote us back." STEPHEN SLAYBAUGH



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Lykke Li

BRIGHT MELODIES, SLICK PRODUCTION and bedazzled sonic baubles are all touchstones of the new generation of Swedish pop. But though those qualities certainly are central to Lykke Li's debut, *Youth Novels*, there's also an underbelly of quixotic darkness, minimalist beats, and themes on life's lost loves, perhaps a consequence of being stranded in Stockholm during the album's creation. Now, almost a full two years since the recording of *Youth Novels*, Li seems stricken with a wanderlust that has crammed her passport full of stamps. Though her heart's still in Sweden, she's recently been prone to jet-set, spending most of her summer touring the world and bouncing through the bustle of her second residence in New York City. It's an acquired trait that can be seen in her kinetic live performance and her worldly plans for the artistic future. There's no bad blood or isolation towards her peers; her affinity for the roots of hip-hop and the gyrating history of American music has just given her a different scope.

It's a trait that she sums up in the differences between Swedish and American artists.

"It's weird because in Sweden, they get provoked quite easily. You can piss them off quite easily. But here people love when you do weird things. Here when I get my groove on, or put on some sexy dance, they take it for what it is. Where in Sweden they take things quite seriously and might think what I do is sexist. I guess people are more used to James Brown here than they are in Sweden," she explained with a determined fervor. "You can do whatever the fuck you want here and people just like it. I love performing here because you can explore yourself more."

Despite the fact that *Youth Novels* might follow a mold set by Peter Bjorn and John or even Robyn, Li would prefer to be the next Patti Smith, Vashti Bunyan, or Q-Tip rather than a Scandinavian Debbie Gibson armed with a kazoo. KEVIN J. ELLIOTT

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RIYL: Black Market Hero, Coheed & Cambria, Flaw

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She is mostly melancholic, sometimes soft but always soulful. Miika Pauley's powerful voice and gentle acoustic guitar create her own brand of coffee house blues.

RIYL: PJ Harvey, Cat Power, Neko Case

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**Vivian
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Vivian Darkbloom offers energetic alt-rock that gets catchier with each listen. With slightly rough vocals and careful attention to guitar/bass interplay, they serve up a charismatic sound that will remain at the top of your playlist for months.

RIYL: Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Wolf Parade, Death Cab for Cutie

WEB: Search **Vivian Darkbloom** at www.ourstage.com

INDIE FOLK ROCK



**Joanna Erdos
and the
Midnight Show**

Joanna Erdos and the Midnight Show are composed of a bass, piano and drums. As their instruments imply, they are a bluesy trio, and are crowned by Erdos' strong, heartfelt vocals.

RIYL: Dresden Dolls, Rilo Kiley, Regina Spektor

WEB: Search **Joanna Erdos and the Midnight Show** at www.ourstage.com

Micromanaging

Growing Up In Public With Deerhunter

Story By Michael Tedder

Photos By Lyndsey Matthews

YOU KNOW, THERE COULD HAVE BEEN SEX TOYS. Furry handcuffs, street-walker ready lingerie and intimidating dildos could have framed our avant rock heroes. If Bradford Cox had his way, the images you'd see on the cover of this magazine and surrounding this piece would have been taken at an adult novelty store in the East Village, or at

the very least at a tattoo parlor where the group could get some bad-ass ink. But his photography suggestions were prudishly overruled in favor of Bleeker Street Record store. Despite some grumbling that we can't find the location of the rarefied Bleeker Bob's store, it isn't long before Cox is swooning over the store's doo-wop section or lustily eyeing their vinyl



Making Bambi blush: (L-R) Moses Archuleta, Lockett Pundt, Bradford Cox, and Josh Fauver

Public Enemy reissues. Clearly, the Deerhunter frontman is on the prowl in his natural environment.

As the band and photographer venture downstairs to the store's extensive vinyl section for some shots, Cox pulls me aside and informs me that he doesn't want the group to be photographed next to any compact discs. In a low, conspiratorial tone, he says that he doesn't want his group associated with a dying medium. A casual chat with Cox will be filled with an abundance of rapid references to his favorite music, from The Cramps to Animal Collective. There's little doubt that he has the soul of a vinyl-loving music store geek. He's also given away several months worth of free MP3s on his band's weblog. But it's still difficult to discern if he's truly taking an aesthetic stand about his preferred music format, or simply trying to fuck with me.

The photo shoots, interviews and this night's performance at the recently opened, avant-centric New York club Le Poisson Rouge are all part of the campaign to promote the Atlanta noise-pop group's third album, *Microcastle*. It's a magnificent accomplishment, filled with hard beauty and scarred pop. Though still undeniably the work of the noisemakers who made last year's much-discussed *Cryptograms*, *Microcastle* is more tuneful and mature than anything else the group has done, and could go a long way towards helping Deerhunter shed their image as indie rock's petulant younger brothers. But even though it might be Deerhunter's time to smile for the cameras, Bradford Cox remains as inscrutable, and volcanic, as the opaque sheets of noise in which he covers his songs.

Cryptocox

Minutes after we return to La Rouge for the interview, Cox begins a tirade. Icelandic composer Ólaf Arnalds is playing an early show that evening, and Cox is convinced that her classically-inclined backing musicians gave his group condescending looks during their sound check (these complaints are punctuated with crotch grabs). Shortly after his jeremiad ends, one of Arnalds' handlers enters the musicians' shared dressing rooms to ask, in a tone normally reserved for elementary school students, that Deerhunter not drink any of Arnalds' special celebratory champagne.

"I don't drink alcohol because of my religion, Christianity," Cox responds in his ever-escalating, piercing voice. But don't get the wrong impression, Cox later warns. "I'm not joking, there is no joking with me ever." If this were the case, then Cox would have you believe that the members of Deerhunter drive around in Bentleys while home in Atlanta, kicked former guitar player Colin Mee out of the group because of his interest in black magic and plan to record three more albums next year. (Actually, that last one is completely within the realm of feasibility, even if said albums likely will not, as Bradford claims, contain contemporary country songs, Celtic music or death metal numbers.)

Though he can be impishly loose with the facts, this much is known about the history of Deerhunter. Born in Athens, Georgia, Cox's tall, thin frame and outsized limbs are the result of the genetic disorder Marfan Syndrome, which affects connective tissue and also typically causes heart problems. Cox spent much of his youth in and out of hospitals, and found comfort in his love of outré music and culture. Some of his happiest memories involved absorbing his cousin's tastes at the age of 10. "I got second hand hits of weed and Butthole Surfers bootlegs at a very early age and I was like, (adopting a low, 'cool guy' voice), 'Shit yeah.' I'm not saying as a 9 or 10 year old I was advanced enough to understand it," he says. "All

I know was that it was offensive, and the album covers looked really cool and it was loud, and my cousin listened to it in his Camaro. But I never aspired to be like them; I thought I was going to be Edward Scissorhands when I grew up. But that never happened."

Instead, Cox grew up to form Deerhunter. His goal was to fuse his love of aggressive punk groups, from Nirvana to The Germs, with his interest in noisy, experimental music, like Brian Eno, Teddy Riley or composer Danny Elfman. The result was a mysterious and hard-hitting maelstrom, unafraid to be beautiful, impenetrable or overwhelming, depending on Cox's whims.

The group went through more than its share of turbulence in its early years, including a revolving door of members, the accidental death of bassist Justin Bosworth and a since-disavowed debut album they've described as rushed. (In typical outlandish fashion, Cox, who is gay, titled the album *Turn It Up, Faggot* after taunts they received at early shows.) The line-up kept revolving until it solidified around co-founder, drummer and keyboard player Moses Archuleta, bassist Josh Fauver, guitarist Colin Mee and Cox's high school best friend Lockett Pundt on guitar and keyboards. After a failed attempt to record with experimental songwriter Samara Lubelski, the group recorded the hazy, violent *Cryptograms* in Atlanta, and signed with the respected Chicago label Kranky, which has worked with Goatsnake, You! Beat Emperor and Low.

"They sent us the first half of *Cryptograms*, which really piqued my ears. Then once they finished it, there was no question whether I should be doing it," says Kranky head Joel Leoschke. "There was a wide variety of sounds and approaches to 'sound' and 'song,' and it was a really cohesive whole. I think it confused some people too. Some people were like 'I really don't like the ambient noisy bits,' but I think the people who say that kind of miss the boat. It's supposed to be a sonic trip."

Indeed, 2007's *Cryptograms* ranged from warm, autumnal pop songs like "Hazel St." to sonic bulldozers like the title track. Combined with Kranky's relatively high profile and their savage, pulverizing live show, Deerhunter became one of last year's buzziest underground music sensations. They also quickly earned as much attention, and derision, for their extracurricular activities. Cox took to performing in a dress, spitting fake blood, performing mock sexual acts on his bandmates, and for good measure also threw in some onstage manic outbursts and bizarre monologues about his childhood. Even more infamously, the group's weblog became a constantly updated clearing for the immature (a back and forth e-mail fight with *LA Weekly* writer Jeff Weiss), the disgusting (constant pictures of the band's fecal discharges) the overly personal (Cox's blogging at length about his childhood sexual abuse) and the inexplicable (the 1980's android drama *D.A.R.Y.L.*, posted to his site in Youtube-sized increments for no apparent reason). Citing an exhaustion with the extra-musical attention, Mee left the group, only to return and then leave again. (Cox declined to comment on his departure, only noting that "he's a speck on the eye of democracy.")

Deerhunter's contempt for restraint, sonically or otherwise, quickly divided the ever-risible internet music community, with prognosticators quick to praise ("No band mattered more to people like me than Deerhunter," said MTV.com writer James Montgomery) or eviscerate ("Deerhunter are an unlistenable mess and a crime against music," according to a comment on the music industry blog *Idolator*). Much of the critical tug of war focused on Cox, and whether he was one of underground rock's greatest frontmen and the most empathic voice the oft-inscrutable avant-noise scene had to offer, or simply a media-hyped toddler several weeks removed from a nap.

"I think there's in-between people who don't blog," says Fauver as Cox laughed. "They wouldn't be inclined to say something if they weren't totally pissed or totally excited about something." But Cox rejects any attempts to mediate. "I think, honestly, the main reason people have a problem with us is... because we don't sound that radical. Anybody who doesn't like us is an asshole that's based their entire opinion on how I look and they haven't even noticed how good looking the rest of the band are," Cox says. "Any they only listen to my loud mouth, they don't listen to how well spoken and eloquent their soft wet voices can be. They never listen to the white worms sucking on the wall, they only hear the great night coming down. Me, the harvester. Do you know what I mean?"

Pop Group

While Cox's knack for staying in the RSS feeds is formidable, it wouldn't mean much if he didn't have the music to back it up. Deerhunter is part of a long tradition of groups that dates back to Suicide, Sonic Youth and The Jesus and Mary Chain. Like these predecessors, Cox and company hotwire experimental, noise-drenched sounds into oft-kilter but sturdy rock 'n' roll song structures. The result is both familiar and cacophonous, palatable for (relative) mass appeal but thrillingly vibrant and fresh. The mix-and-match approach leaves Deerhunter in the unique position of being hooky enough to tour with Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Black Lips, and weird enough to associate with the sonic abstractors in Animal Collective.

"In terms of more experimental music, you find something like (composer) Steve Riche, and you think, 'This is the most amazing music. It's so avant garde, this music is my music,'" Cox says, "And then you realize that everybody else likes it too; it's not really that avant garde. I think the attraction for bands like us, No Age and Animal Collective, is that we realized somewhere along the line that there is no such a thing as avant garde and genres are pointless, and everybody is kind of just groping for something that at once is nostalgic but on second glance is self-critically anti-nostalgic. We are all super nostalgic, but we all want to deny that."

Of course, this is all relative. Producer Nicolas Vernhes refers to the group as "straight-forward pop with some effects and some kind of adventurous stuff." Then again, Vernhes has been at the forefront of this decade's new wave of experimental music, having helmed records for boundary pushers like Black Dice and The Fiery Furnaces. When Deerhunter's initial recording sessions for *Cryptograms* with Samara Lubelski, at his Rare Book Room studio in Brooklyn, fell apart due to personality conflicts and tape machine errors, he offered to mix their second attempt at the album. Eventually, he found himself in the producer's chair this past April when the group began work on *Microcastle*. Even he was surprised at how easy it went.

"I had heard horror stories coming from a few people, mostly about Bradford. I was shocked because we got along really, really well. I don't think we had harsh words once," Vernhes says. "He was approaching me from a more professional perspective of 'let's get this done, let's concentrate.' So it's weird, it's like having a friend that you know is misbehaving all the time, but never really does it in front of you."

After a short hiatus at the end of '07 and the beginning of '08, during which time Cox released the full-length debut by his ambient pop solo project Atlas Sound, Deerhunter resurfaced. Gone were the outlandish stage gimmicks, and the band's web blog was mostly dedicated to live YouTube clips and hundreds of free mp3s from Atlas Sound. Was this the sign of a grown-up Deerhunter?

"They were sick of what they were doing. I think it's conscious in the sense that they're developing and they're learning a lot," Vernhes says. "They went from being pretty much unknown to being pretty well known, maybe not musically but at least by name, pretty fast. I think like all good performers, (Cox) knows what he's doing. As much as he enjoys talking to everyone and having a bit of fun with it, I think the thing he likes the most is to make music, by far."

Vernhes says that while previous Deerhunter records achieved their shrouded, mysterious quality by being drenched in delay effects, for *Microcastle* the group decided to pursue a relatively drier sound. "They wanted to get away from the layers and layers of effects and get one step closer to whoever's listening." Instead, the group concentrated on focused overdubs and precise arrangements, and Cox infused the songs with his love of Phil Spector-helmed, girl group pop songwriting. The result, though still chaotic by any reasonable standard, is what Cox terms "a Jonas Brothers on acid record." A few minutes later, Cox amends his chemical comparison.

"It's a very detached record, a very drugged record. I don't mean drugged in a psychedelic way, in like a sedated, numb way," Cox explains. "I don't think that *Microcastle* is an emotional record at all. I mean to me it might be the most depressing record ever made, maybe it doesn't sound it. Where as *Cryptograms* is physical depression, like nausea, discomfort and terror, I mean you can really hear it and feel it. *Microcastle* is more scary cause it's like the dude in your class that used to carve pentagrams into shit and threaten people, but then they gave him medicine and then suddenly he's a pretty nice guy. But you're not able to trust him because, although he seems nice, you still feel like, 'Wait a minute, this guy is still a little fucked up.'"

Hunting Party

Like Hole and The Stooges before them, Deerhunter often has to contend with being viewed as The Bradford Cox show instead of a band. Cox is quick to point out that all members contribute parts and ideas, and that Pundt wrote and sang "Agoraphobia" and Fauver penned "Nothing Ever Happened." But such is the outsized nature of his personality that, in conversation, he seemingly can't help overwhelming the rest of the members, who talk so rarely that it's hard not to assume they've all long given up hope of getting a word in edgewise—sometimes to Cox's chagrin. When I asked Cox how *Microcastle* came out compared to what the group was aiming for, he noted that "some of these questions should be directed at the other band mates, so the press will get a little bit of an idea of what I have to deal with."

"We have a consistent knack throughout the history of the band, for going in with one thing and coming out with something completely different, which isn't to say bad, I guess, just different," Archuleta explains. "We're like, 'Let's write a doo wop song.' But by the time we are done with it, it doesn't sound like that at all. So I don't know; it comes out..." And as his voice starts to trail off, Cox interjects with, "It's like a 10-year-old boy who only eats asparagus for a week in hopes that he can shit neon green, and he sits on the toilet and waits all week, and he finally takes a shit and it's just normal shit," Cox says, "But then you look back at it and it's the biggest shit a 10-year-old can take. So looking back at it then he achieved something. We still achieved something, and we're young, or I'm young; I mean the medium age for us is youngish."

Maybe he just can't help it. "I think he's like a little ball of energy, so he just kind of draws people in," Vernhes says. "You know, it's like that

mutual kind of friendship where they need him, he needs them." And though Cox may soak up most of the attention, Vernhes says that during the recording of *Castle*, the frontman did his best to push his bandmates to step into the spotlight. "He's got a lot of ideas and because the majority of the songs come from him, he's got the vision of the creator. So it was interesting to see he was really pushing Lockett to develop his own song and to spend time on it and not dismiss it as, 'Okay. Are you done with it? Now get back to my stuff.' He was actually very nice, and encouraged him to sing the second song because he thought it would sound more interesting."

But despite their attempt to appear more grown-up, sometimes Deerhunter can't help but find themselves in the middle of drama. In May, *Microcastle* leaked onto file-sharing services a week after it was completed and months before its October release date. After internal debate, Kranky and the band decided to stick with the original release date, though they made the album available through digital retailers. In reaction, the relentlessly prolific group self-recorded another new album, *Weird Era Cont.* as "a consolation prize for actually buying what was already all over the internet," according to Fauver. The plan was to include *Weird*, a discordant, volatile yin to *Castle*'s melodic yang, as a secret bonus disc on retail copies of the album. That leaked too.

"I decided that since I had already ruined Christmas, that I would take Easter out too," Cox says with disdain dripping from his voice. "A lot of people like to think that I leaked it in a plea for attention from the indie rock kids that I so desperately want to like me, and that I was trying to say, 'Hey world, here we are, look at me, look at us. Well, maybe look at me, okay, glance at them and then look at me and concentrate your attention on me because I've got something to say.' That's not the case, I've never leaked a record in my life."

Cox unleashed a vitriolic blog post in response to *Weird*'s leak, and then apologized when he realized he had accidentally made the record, as well as demos for a new Atlas Sound album, available by not securely locking his mediafile online access. "I got taken advantage of. I don't give a shit if people say I'm whining about it. I don't blame kids for listening to it," Cox says. "We download shit constantly, how do you think I learned about music? I'm poor; I wasn't born in a record store. But the point is that we don't mind people downloading a leaked record; it's that we mind the kids that leak records that are intended to be surprises... and aren't mastered and aren't finished. That's fucking corrupt."

Fortunately, there's more where that came from. When asked about his plans for the next year, Cox asks his bandmates, "Are you okay with making two or three records next year, and I'm not being sarcastic?" (Archuleta's response: "What are you talking about?") He goes on to detail, *caveat emptor*, that the first of the series will be called *Rainwater Cassette Exchange* and "is supposed to invoke the atmosphere of when you're like a kid and you first go into a used cassette store, or a used CD store, this is before the internet,



back when music was exciting," and "I want it to be an encyclopedia of what we as a group find interesting in rock music in the past 20th century. There's going to be a no wave song and a Ramones song, and a baroque pop song. I want there to be such a distinction between every song on the album. I want to challenge ourselves, I don't want there to be any songs where any of the same guitars and amps are used, where any of the same era techniques are used. Are you guys interested in this challenge?"

A minute later he adds, "Moses, what do you think about this? Are you writing this down?"

Weird Era Forever

Following a long tirade of questionable seriousness about how "if I were pretty you wouldn't be sitting here interviewing me," Cox notes that, "a lot of times I think I just want to be a normal dude in a normal band, but then I realize that we would be like Angels And Airwaves, which the thought of that physically hurts Moses."

The world is full of normal bands. Later that night onstage at the Rouge, Cox proved that there's no one else like Deerhunter. In-between calling out Fauver from the stage for being a few minutes late to the show to sharing a story about how he missed meeting Lou Reed backstage while he was buying a book about The Velvet Underground at a nearby bookstore, Deerhunter assault the audience with incandescent melodies and mountains of washed-out reverb. As the night wore on, the volume and intensity only increased until the air itself felt weighed down by the density of Deerhunter's sound. And in the middle of the maelstrom was a beaming, giddy Cox. At peace, if only for a moment.



Heartsrevolution

'Keep On Truckin'

Story By Lisa Hresko

LEYLA SAFAI WEARS MANY HATS: A SINGLE MOM, one half of the lo-fi disco-punk duo Heartsrevolution and an intrepid entrepreneur. Safai, known simply as Lo on the darkened stage, commands her small band with a dominating, throaty wail and bopping wildly onstage to fizzing electronic bleep and drum-laden jams. This is no sleepy trip-hop, it's more like Cirque Du Hacker-Rave came rolling into town in full costume with treats in tow and smiles for everyone. With an October EP, *Switchblade* (IHEARTCOMIX)—on which Lo sings late-night summer anthems packed with nods to 2 Live Crew, Sonic Youth and Suidical Tendencies—on the loose and a full-length album in the works, the fashion-forward twosome are ready for whatever comes their way.

It's not often that a band can conjure up a distinct personality for itself simply from one-off projects, but jet-setting Safai and Ben Pollock have

worked to put some extra love and constant visual oomph into each piece to create a true Heartsrevolution aesthetic. First came a limited-run, green 7-inch split with Crystal Castles that sold out in just a few days, rocketing them onto the nu-rave radar. This was quickly followed by another EP, pressed onto white vinyl and coming in the shape of, you guessed it, a heart.

And who'd have thought that in the days of music pirates and a rabid sense of music entitlement from consumers, that people would be shelling out \$45 for a five-song EP? Before its CD release, *Switchblade* was designed by British fashion icon Kate Moross, first pressed on bubblegum pink 10-inch vinyl, with a beautiful holographic sleeve. "It's strange to see kids pay that kind of money for five tracks, but I think it's because they want to support what the bigger picture is. People want to buy the songs, and they are part of it," says Lo cheerfully.

"There's this focus on celebrity... everybody's trying to obtain this unattainable goal of being in the spotlight."

Big Business

Safai's a dreamer, never having lost an unadulterated sense of wonder. Fresh off a plane from Japan she describes the landscape, an ephemeral fantasyland in her eyes, en route to the airport with wide-eyed adoration. "When we just had arrived and we took the highway into the city, the roads are elevated, and there's these big lush green leafy overhung trees that almost look like a forest. I don't think it's really a forest—a magical place. The leaves are so dark and so green and so big, and the forest was twinkling, and there's gnomes and fairies and foxes that talk and all sorts of weird shit in there." It's no wonder she would live an atypical lifestyle.

Like any traveling band (although the band is still relatively new to the tour-beaten road), an integral part of Heartsrevolution is its transportation. Lo captains a convoy of six cotton-candy colored vintage ice cream trucks under the name Heartschallenger. Heartschallenger does more than just bare a band cross-country, though. In the driver's seat Lo is wheelin' and dealin' band merch and an assortment of tasty treats and goodies. Stocked with candy, ice cream, glitter, popguns and enough treats and sugar to keep an eight-year-old wired for a month, it's a diabetic's nightmare on wheels. But it wasn't always so easy. Safai was a small business owner prior to the band's inception. Fueling off a childhood idea that a store should be mobile and fed-up with the idea of being a grown-up, working for the man and paying bills as usual, she picked up an old ice cream truck to sell her wares. It was never her intention for this to be a full-time gig, but people loved it. "The day I finished I was so excited; I was like, 'This is awesome! I want to drive this around the whole day, every day!'" she says. And thus she found her calling.

Along with stocking Japanese mochi, Kosher Bazooka Joe, vegan ice cream and whatever international treats strike their fancy, toys are hot sellers. "We sell all of our fan merch, t-shirts, button packs, zipper packs, random jewelry, stuff from our friends that they make, vintage toys, really cool laser guns," Lo explains. "I'm obsessed with guns and knives so we have a lot of glitter guns and sparkle guns." The toys and swag are not only assembled from a love of all things shiny, some goods pop up from all corners of the globe. "Now we have an international friendship community, which kinda sounds gay but it's truly not. We have these awesome fans/friends around the world that are like, 'I do graffiti in Brazil,' and they'd send us a sticker pack and we'll let people know about their blogs. Or somebody will make merch. Some guy from Canada just made us Heartschallenger

necklaces made out of recycled records, all colored vinyl. So people know that it's possible to sell stuff to us and make things happen, and so people are sending us samples all the time. It's awesome."

Business is booming and Safai now has six old ice cream or mail trucks from decades long past, one each in Miami, New York and Los Angeles, and three waiting for shipment overseas for future tours.

Oh My Blog

Merch, specifically a t-shirt with text in the fashion of an eye chart, sold quickly from the trucks and online. And in fashion nothing says you're hot like a knockoff, and Heartsrevolution's design got covered. "Instead of Heartsrevolution it says 'Heart Devolution.' It's kind of flattering because it was one of the most popular shirts in the indie scene last year. I cannot tell how many shirts I sold. I was sending them to the most bizarre corners of the world, where I was like 'who the fuck is ordering [these]?' What blog or website are they finding us from?" It went everywhere!"

And in a web-savvy scene—whether they like it or not—where giving your all is seen too often as unhip, Heartsrevolution do not lend themselves to the world of uber-chic apathy. "So many bands say that 'I made these songs on Myspace by accident and I didn't think anything would happen or that anyone would like it.' You're so lucky to have people have a response to what you're making, and it's something you should be grateful for and not take for granted," she says. "It's very time consuming and artful to produce songs and then produce a way to put them out into the world, and it's very much a part of who we are and what we believe in."

Aside from making it in a jaded world, the faceless internet can be cruel, hiding under a thick shade of anonymity. "Sometimes you hear a rumor and it stings a little bit," Lo says of the web backlash that's hit the oft remixed Heartsrevolution. "That's often the problem now; there's this focus on celebrity. People have alternative lifestyles and everybody's trying to obtain this unattainable goal of being in the spotlight."

"Some blog was comparing us to Crystal Castles and I think it's the laziest comparison, other than the fact that they have a penis and a vagina, and we have a penis and a vagina... It compares my makeup to Alice [Glass]'s makeup. It compares the stance of Ben, what angle at what degree he's standing at, compared to Ethan [Kath] and if they're actually doing anything. And it's really funny. Because of that we got a lot of friends on MySpace saying, 'Did you see that? Fuck them!'" Lo laughs. "It doesn't matter to me, it's just one blog. It's just the point that people like to talk shit... I guess when people stop talking about you is the time you should be concerned. For every bad thing I hear, I hear 10 good [things]. So there's no complaint on my end."

The intangible idea of Heartschallenger was never a mighty convoy of ice cream trucks or mock violent electroclash. "It's not like an exclusive club," the ever-optimistic Lo explains. "Everybody's a Heartschallenger. Everybody can choose their own adventure and everybody can find some sort of inspiration from this story."



Paris Hilton as Anna, bound to a real from getting plastic surgery and abusing painkillers.

Repo!

The Genetic Opera

By Tiffany Kilfeather

BLACK LEATHER. WHITE-FACE. Histrionic rock numbers and choreography. You're thinking *Rocky Horror*, right? Well how about ripped entrails, human-skin face masks and Paris Hilton? Yeah, probably not so much now. When *Repo! The Genetic Opera* comes out via Twisted Pictures and Lionsgate, the *Rocky Horror* references will be on-deadline critics' favorite comparison for this goth rock opera. Sure, it's off-beat sexy, at times laughably corny and will probably appeal to the same subculture that pulled on their fishnets and sang the "Time Warp." But it's not because they have anything more in common than a musical soundtrack – it's because the musical soundtrack kicks ass, and the film is a guilty-pleasure break from self-important, Oscar-buzzed monotony.

"The one thing that everybody loved doing, which was dressing up, seeing it and being part of the cult, I think will appeal [to audiences]," said Anthony Stewart Head, who plays Nathan/Repo-Man (and played Dr. Frank 'N' Furter in a London *Rocky Horror* revival). "I think the density of *Repo*, the fact that there is so much music means you sort of have to get into it to get the words."

Repo's world is one of industrial fall-out, reflected in the gritty rock soundtrack with an operatic twist. A plague descends on the planet that sends humanity into organ failure, allowing the company Geneco to make a business out of selling people organs. But there's a catch: if you're late on payment, they'll send the "Repo-man" out to collect on their property, a.k.a. reclaim your life. The way Terrance Zdunich (co-writer and *Repo's* original "Graverobber") talks about it you'd think he's writing a history thesis: "[The plague] attacked your central nervous system, and essentially all it did was pave the way for a company like Geneco to come in and capitalize

on human suffering in a way that allowed them to commercialize surgery and painkillers."

His boundless enthusiasm is genuine: the *Repo* world is so dense and detailed because it's been a project running for nearly a decade. Co-creators Zdunich and Darren Smith (a professional composer and musician who learned banjo from Peter Dinklage) met in an acting class eight years ago, and decided to write a 10-minute dark rock opera about a graverobber. "I was thinking more along the lines of Edgar Allen Poe, and [Smith] said, 'Why don't we set it in the future and make it something unique to what you've heard or seen before?'" said Zdunich. "So we're coming up with all these characters that he would see while he was in the graveyard, and one of them was this organ repo-man."

The show went on tours through rock clubs, slowly amassing an eager following that would lead to a full stage opera on Broadway. "People would tend to come up to us and say, 'Well, that's a really cool idea, so tell us more about the organ repo-man,'" said Zdunich. "So their interest and intrigue based around that one story gave us the inspiration to expand it further, and it was a gradual process of expansion ever since." *Repo's* bloody buckets of slicing, dripping, stabbing and oozing was something gore expert Darren Bousman (*Saw II, III, IV*) couldn't resist; he directed both the short *Repo* film that led to its studio deal and the full feature.

Bousman is the first well-known name of many in an insanely unpredictable cast list. Paul Sorvino is Geneco's CEO, Rotti Largo; Paris Hilton, Bill Moseley and Ogre (Skinny Puppy) are his leeching kids; Alexa Vega (*Spy Kids*) is Shilo, the child with a blood disease; and Anthony Stewart Head (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*) is her father, the man with a double life:

Nathan Wallace and the Repo-Man. The shock comes in when you realize this is a rock *opera*, meaning no spoken dialogue, and all these names have to sing their way through the movie.

Diehard *Buffy* fans and anyone who's seen its musical episode "Once More With Feeling" know that Anthony Head is a repressed rock star, and from the moment he opens his mouth to sing on "Legal Assassin," it should be evident why. Mark "Moke" Bistany, the drummer of Otep, and Rob Zombie guitarist Tommy Clefeus give the track a brutal, gut-wrenching metal underbelly as Head kills the vocals. It's the movie's darkest, most classic hard rock single, and could possibly legitimize the creation of the film and soundtrack on its own. Head can wall and grumble with the best of metal's howlers. "He came in and just knocked it out of the park," said Zdunich. "He came in strong at hour one and he left strong at hour 10, and it was like, 'This guy's a fucking machine.'"

It might have something to do with his education at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, or singing in bands called Two Way, Really Big Boys and Executive Toys ("God help us - we sounded like a sexual proclivity"), or the fact that he trained with Helena Shennel, the same who taught Johnny Rotten and Annie Lennox. "I have to say some of the stuff that I did on *Repo* she probably would've shaken a finger at me for doing," said Head. "I mean, sort of hitting some extreme notes and rocking it up, 'cause I wanted to break the voice so that it sounded funky in places."

Skinny Puppy's Ogre is the perfectly creepy Parvi Largo, who womanizes and then steals his girlfriends' faces to use as his own - and the sick pup wasn't even on the original cast wish list. "With his whole persona and what he does with his own theatrical version of his music, it was like, 'oh my God he's totally Parvi,'" said Zdunich.

And then there's Paris, who had to fight for the chance to audition because the creators and producers were worried about a backlash of "stunt casting" critiques. "We were like, 'who could play a spoiled heiress, someone who's a tabloid magnet, who's addicted to surgery?' And so very naturally it was like, Paris Hilton - you know she almost is that in real life," said Zdunich.

They eventually allowed her to audition, and apparently blew them away. "We were like 'Know what, we should just say 'fuck it and if the press kills us about this, and if the general public ridicules us about casting her, the reality is she's gonna be good in this film,'" he said, "and I think almost helped to make it this weird cult casting that I think will play into *Repo*'s longevity."

She actually does pull it off, starting off a succession of surprise performances that includes Sorvino, an apparently trained opera singer who can shatter glass with the notes he hits on "Gold." While the lyrics are sometimes a bit shoddy, the music is usually stunning, due to a cast that includes Stephen Perkins (Jane's Addiction), David J (Bauhaus), Blasko (Ozzy Osborne), Richard Patrick (Filter), Richard Fortus (Guns n' Roses), Sonny Moore (From First To Last), Joan Jett and many, many others.

"We actually had people who walked out of the theater not liking it and saying 'I don't get it, it wasn't for me,' and then they're singing the songs and saying they want to see it again two days later," said Zdunich. Which may be why the soundtrack was released nearly a month before the film's release date, on September 30 - to get people singing before stepping foot in theaters.

But like any potential cult movie, the film has been met with guarded enthusiasm by Lionsgate, and will see a limited release on November 7, with the potential for more if there's a good response. "They didn't necessarily totally know what they were making, and what they're making is something that perhaps isn't commercial," said Zdunich. "We're just trying to slowly, hopefully get Lionsgate to believe in the movie, and believe that there is a market of goth misfits that will just eat the world of *Repo* up and really want to be a part of it."

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The Sea

The Other Bass Hating, Family Duo

By Tiffany Kilfeather

YES, THEY SHARE THE SAME LAST NAME. Yes, a bass doesn't get anywhere near band practice. Yes, they make poppy garage punk to lift your spirits, glasses and legs into a dance frenzy. But no, they are not, repeat are not, the White Stripes. The Sea is a brotherly duo from England who – although they just missed the wave of new garage punk that Jet, the Black Keys, the Hives and the White Stripes rode in on – might have enough grit and charm to keep the movement cooking in the midst of synth-dominated indie rock.

"We're such a new band, I find it quite amusing when people say, 'Oh, they sound like the White Stripes.' Well, the White Stripes have had, what, six albums?" said Peter Chisolm, singer, guitarist and older brother. "Maybe the next album or next song we release will be totally different. But it doesn't bother me; I'd rather we're compared to them than a shit band."

Comparisons to modern garage-rock veterans should be flattering, in fact, considering The Sea was only just recently born out of primordial ooze. Alex and Peter Chisolm decided last year to nix the four-piece band they had toured with for three years, slimming down to just Alex on drums and Peter on guitar and lead vocals. "We were never really that serious about it to start with," said Peter, "we just did it because we wanted to play some music. And obviously, if you don't put any pressure on yourself, it comes out better." In just a few short months they won the XFM unsigned competition to play at Brixton Academy to 5000 people, followed by a performance slot at Glastonbury festival and critical acclaim from national press and radio.

"He's my best mate, and I wouldn't want to be in a band with anybody else," said Peter. "You want to share these experiences with someone. I mean, who better to share it with than your little brother?" Like any good Brit, their guitarist father had Beatles and Rolling Stones records playing around the house as they were growing up, when one day Alex felt the music take hold and decided to learn drums. Peter soon followed. "I thought well, if he's playing drums then I might as well learn guitar. I mean, my God he can't do something that I'm not doing," said Peter.

After years of learning their instruments and being weaned on the rock classics, Alex and Peter left home in their teens to tour the world...surfing. Professional surfing seems to have had little effect on their sound, but what it did influence is their name. "It was like, literally putting our wet suits on and Alex going, 'What about The Sea?' and I was like, 'That's brilliant! Yes, let's do it!'" said Peter. "I mean, surely there should have been a band once upon a time called it, but no. So, happy days!"

The Chisolms' chemistry is explosive on *Get It Back*, their debut album that retains the dirty, angst-filled fringes of punk without leaving a single note out of place, infusing elements of blues and jazz to give it some hip shake. "What we got from listening to [jazz] was that sort of chaos, ya



A Faceless Family Portrait: (L-R) Peter and Alex Chisolm

know?" said Peter. "You listen to it, and you're like, 'Fuck, what the hell are they doing?' And I wanted to try and capture that sort of vibe."

The songs are electrified by Peter's sung/yelled vocals, which hide the commanding, guttural wail that finally exposes itself on the song "By Myself." The track comes in with light guitar and soft, '60s-rock crooning, then stops abruptly, gripping your heart as cymbals flutter and Peter sings one drawn-out, isolated syllable: "I'm." The tension builds and breaks as the drums come back in and he howls, "I'm by myself, and I won't come down again."

"It's about a one of those songs, you know; it's a bit miserable. I always try to turn misery into euphoria," said Peter. "I like to sort of fuck it up a bit." It's a hair-raising, powerful song that, along with the blues lament "I Spend My Days," gives dimension and strut-worthy style to this "it looks easy but you just try and make this kind of magic" band. "The comments you'll get after gigs are like, 'I can't believe there's just two of you, surely you've got somebody hidden somewhere,'" said Peter. "It was like, how do we make it sound like it looks? And so basically we just went in and recorded it live."

"Don't You Want Me" falls more in line with the rest of the tracks. Its emphatic "doo-duh-doo" open the album and send it plummeting over a cliff to foot-stomping, garage rock bliss. Its lyrics are simple and clever ("Got a lot of dreams but I got no time or money to lend"), but are immediately isolated by the following track, "Love Love Love." The only words in the song are: "I get my kicks from it/Well she walks like a reptile/ And she thrills me all night long/Love love love."

"It's about a prostitute I saw walking in London. I guess she must have been on crack or something, but she was kind of moving weird," said Peter. "I just looked at Alex and was like, 'Oh my God, she's walking like a reptile.' I think I was probably quite thrilled myself."

Things like giggling at scaly ladies of the night make it easy to get swept up in their fun, innocent charm. "I want to keep moving as a musician, and just be a happy person," said Peter, and it's easy to believe in his sincerity. "I know for a fact that the next album will be totally different to this one. But whether we've got like a 16-piece orchestra or whatever, it'll still just be me and Alex. We'll just hide them behind a curtain or something."

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Darker My Love

2 (DANGERBIRD)

On this follow-up to their 2006 debut, these California cruisers ride the faders to oomph on all the essentials: tempos, guitar fuzz and general volume. Amid this elastic, fuzz-drone maelstrom, songs rarely stray far from the main riff as the kick drum keeps a prominent punch in the center (a byproduct of some members' punk past, perhaps?). Like in the roof-leaping opener, "Northern Soul," that announces the soaring psych that is the band's desire, but actually pounds harder as it proceeds. By "Two Ways Out," the band's in hook mode with "woo-woos" bobbing, as the song ambles out like a Brit-popper appearing from his flat, rubbing the hangover out of his eyes as the sun burns in. **Eric Davidson**

Link www.myspace.com/darkermyllove
 RIYL Black Angels, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Ride
 File Under Darklands

Kimya Dawson

Alphabutt (X)

Kimya Dawson has kept busy since she contributed a chunk of the soundtrack to 2007's teen pregnancy flick, *Juno*. This time around the love ditties that helped catapult Dawson into the media last year are mostly gone, filled in by acoustically strummed children's songs for or about her two-year-old daughter Panda Delilah (that's really her name). If *Juno* had a sequel, this would be the soundtrack and Jennifer Garner's character would sing these songs to her newly adopted child. Besides the precious sounds of a baby laughing and children singing along in the background of most tracks, there are also



Kimya Dawson



Michael Franti and Spearhead

plenty of juvenile fart jokes to go around, pleasing the little kid in all of us. **Lyndsay Matthews**

Link www.kimyadawson.com
 File Under Kid rock
 RIYL Moldy Peaches, Jeffrey Lewis, Raffi

Deerhoof

Offend Maggie (KILL ROCK STARS)

In a constant quest for colorfully unconventional rock and a penchant for using outlandish syntax and intonation as if it were just another instrument (see "Basket Ball Get Your Groove Back"), the oddly charming San Francisco quartet masterfully piece together fragments of sonic debris on their latest album. Haunting influences of enka (a 19-20th century maudlin Japanese movement) left an imprint on impish singer/bassist, Satomi Matsuzaki, long after leaving her Tokyo home. This influence comes through clearly during the lament-leaning

songs on *Offend Maggie* that offer romanticized, postmodern re-stylings of that traditional sound. Ever channeling rousing no wave and a wild-eyed anything-goes noisier spirit, Deerhoof execute yet another thorough composition with elegant drama and a healthy dose of panache. **Lisa Nersis**

Link www.myspace.com/deerhoof
 File Under Don't call us Deerhunter
 RIYL Dengue Fever, Enon, Erase Errata

DeLeon

DeLeon (JUB)

DeLeon is a Brooklyn band trading in, according to their press release, a "combination of 15th century Spanish music and modern indie rock with the...entrancing cadences of the ancient Sephardic Jewish tradition." Well, since my mother forbade me from listening to ancient Sephardic Jewish music ("Too wild, you'll do drugs!" she said), I can only assume it slinks

around like the humid Grecian guitar and wanton vocals that pulsate out of this debut. Romantic horn-flecked waltzes ("Be Still, Angelino"), go-go Gypsy kickers ("La Ner V Livsoinim"), and some kind of new wave stroll ("Almond Trees") are just some of the seamless swirls of low-rent loft rock and Spanish-crowned sunset laments here that surprise at each turn. **ED**

Link www.ilovedeleon.com
 File Under Dyl
 RIYL Gogol Bordello, Talking Heads, Golem

Michael Franti & Spearhead

All Rebel Rockers (ANTI)

Behind the mic since the mid '80s, recording artist, poet and habitually barefoot peace advocate Michael Franti commands his longtime band Spearhead in a dub-heavy new venture. From the party-rock beat on "A Little Bit Of Riddim" to the intense radio-clash tone of "The Future" and the somber

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"Have A Little Faith," Franti's progressive, yet unwaveringly positive voice is like a refreshing rush of cool wind amidst a mixture of funk and reggae dub. Even when he's not working for NGOs like Oxfam and Amnesty International, Franti speaks a global language through his music. As with inspired tracks like "Nobody Right, Nobody Wrong," Franti is constantly focused on peaceful protest against social inequality and other worldly ills. **LM**

Link www.spearheadvibrations.com
File Under Roots, rock, righteousness
RVL Zap Mama, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Rootz Underground

El Guincho

Aleganza (OL/YOUNG TURKS)
 Ghostly chants and ethereal rhythms punctuate the debut album of Pablo Diaz-Reixa, the single driving force behind El Guincho. But despite the shivering, haunting sounds, *Aleganza* is ultimately a refreshingly upbeat album. Born in the Canary Islands, Barcelona-based Diaz-Reixa composes a sunny web of sonic exotica, intricately mixing each miniature composition into a psychedelic trance oeuvre, most notably on the centerpiece "Cuando Maravilla Fui," a pitch-perfect pastiche of schoolyard hand claps and operatic howls at the moon. Each track begins with a distant organic rhythmic base—the steady downpour of rain sticks, a chorus of playful children's voices, the tinny clash of steel drums—then is layered with rumbling Spanish language narration, quivering tropicalia guitars and fiery flamenco melodies. **LM**

Link www.myspace.com/elguincho
File Under Sunny Side of the Moon
RVL Panda Bear, Savath And Savalas, Konono No. 1

Gang Gang Dance

Saint Dymphna (SOCIAL REGISTRY)
 Gang Gang Dance is the kind of group that defies easy generalizations. Rather



than recycling the sounds of decades gone by, they actively work against that *laissez-faire* recording and strive for constant reinvention of technique and mentality, from album to album, and even from song to song. That is probably why their new album, *Saint Dymphna*, is such a gem. The music is colorful and almost visual as the band redefines what they refer to as their "neo-tribal" music yet again. The album starts with a celestial mix of soaring notes and chimes, all grounded by their earthy percussion, with arching, swooping female vocals filling out the top. Listened to on headphones, the album's true genius comes out; the music surrounds you and plays with sounds created between your ears, reaching an almost transcendental fullness. The song "Princes" takes GGD's chanting and turns it into a fast-flowing rap, running alongside the harsh and melodic cries of the female vocals, all across a melody that feels like it's rushing forward, building into a crescendo. This frenzied feeling is repeated throughout the album, almost bullying the listener until they start dancing or fall into a trance. A few songs later, "House Jam" comes up, which is much more than the standard club music it presents itself as—the layers of texture in this song are completely mesmerizing. GGD's continued amazing work is sure to make them a revolutionary element. **Emily Hinton**

Link www.myspace.com/ganggangdance
File Under Neo-tribal
RVL Animal collective, Deerhoof, Xiu Xiu

Gaslight Anthem

The '59 Sound (SIDEONE DUMM)
 The Gaslight Anthem may sound like Springsteen gone punk, but it's no simple gimmick. They're still a New Jersey working-man band, pumping out straightforward, wistful rock on their second LP. Brian Fallon brings a Tim-Kasher-minus-the-pathos feel, and the reverb aura gives the whole affair a vaguely '80s sheen. Even though the band's focus is alternately down-to-earth and anthemic, *The '59 Sound* is at its most charming when the wall of guitars dissolves in "Here's Looking At You, Kid" and "Film Noir." In other places, like the title track and "Great Expectations," it's all about the exhilaration that goes along with raw, driving rock. In the end, the Gaslight Anthem manages to skirt Warped Tour territory by finding their own niche. **Tyler Theofilos**

Link www.gaslightanthem.com
File Under "Vintage" punk
RVL Hold Steady, Hot Water Music, Bruce Springsteen

Hawtnay Troof

Islands Of Ayle (RETARD DISCO/SOUTHERN)
 From the computer freakout of a first track—complete with acid choir, piano hits and whispers of "I've waited"—Hawtnay Troof (a.k.a. Vice Cooler) announces himself as the new undisputed Grand Purveyor of Weird. His third album sizzles with a beat-heavy, electro intensity that could have been a Beck record if Beck was perpetually tripping balls. Like Beck, Cooler is able to focus even his most bizarre soundscapes into three-minute blasts of danceable music. He's also a rapper, in the least virtuosic sense of the word, combining panicked rhythms with give-up rhymes. But that's part of the fun of songs like "Venus Venus Piper" and "Front My Hope" that skitter along in party-anthem fashion before

getting into more transcendent electronic trouble. **TT**

Link www.hawtnaytroof.com
File Under Tripping balls
RVL Beck, Animal Collective, Beastie Boys

The Human Abstract

Midheaven (HOPELESS)
 You'd expect a band whose name references a William Blake poem, boasts a heavy lyrical vocabulary, and writes about politics and philosophy to be a more inspired metalcore band—and you wouldn't be disappointed with *Midheaven*. Guitars harmonize over insanely complex riffs while piano solos give jarring interludes amid the catchy melodies. Nathan Ellis' strong vocals sometimes take on a nasal and whine quality that almost lands him in emo territory, but other times wails with a gritty intensity like a metal version of a soul diva's chest roar. In a genre often content to stick to a formula, the Human Abstract bend metal into a technically progressive form that still offers instrumental variation and throaty, guttural melodies. **Tiffany Kilfeather**

Link www.thehumanabstract.com
File Under Metallic progression
RVL Protest The Hero, All That Remains, From First To Last

Human Highway

Moody Motorcycle (SUICIDE SQUEEZE)
 Nick Thornburn is a busy man these days. Hot on the heels of Islands' latest release, he joins forces with fellow Canadian and ex-member of Islands, singer-songwriter Jim Guthrie, to become Human Highway. This is Thornburn's sixth project since the untimely dissolution of Unicorns four years ago. On this Human Highway debut, the duo trades Islands' rich, grandiose orchestration for a more mellow, acoustic sound, yet the songwriters' keen sense of melody hasn't deserted them. Thornburn and Guthrie's compositions build slowly and swell with doo-wop style backing vocals while the catchy folk-pop inspired harmonies

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Link www.myspace.com/humanhighway
File Under Motorcycle boys
RIYL Belle & Sebastian, Kings of Convenience, The Thrills

Lindström

Where You Go I Go Too

(SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND)

No, this isn't a concept album about using public restrooms. Norwegian producer Hans-Peter Lindström's fourth long-player could be considered the Ys of contemporary disco, with only three tracks and weighing in at just under an hour. Yet unlike Joanna Newsom's finely orchestrated 2006 release, *Where You Go...* grooves in a meandering direction that often loops around and repeats itself. At 22 minutes into the nearly 29-minute opening track, the same riff repeats over frantic, caffeinated beats. The jittering bass lines below the synth melodies induce a frenzy that builds and builds... and builds, but is never entirely resolved. Patience pays off in the last song where synth and percussion swirl into an atmospheric spiral of funky electronic bliss. **LM**

Link www.feedelity.com
File Under Electro to go
RIYL Ricardo Villalobos, Gui Boratto, Booka Shade Release

Terry Lynn

Kingstonlog 2.0 (LAST GANG)

Terry Lynn's commitment to every word is aggressive but not abrasive, her effortless flow masking clenched lyrical fists. Her debut's soul-stirring industrial beats will make the most awkward wallflower's limbs ache to move in rhythm. The title track takes inspiration from Daft Punk's "Technologic," changing the lyrics to, "Load it lock it pack it strap it/handgun long guns automatic." And though it may be a little soon to reinvent that recent single, the contrast between America's

consumerist technology obsession and Kingston's violent reality is effective and powerful. This is more than a well-crafted album from the Jamaican underground; it's a portrait of denizens from an unjust society that aim to break free of the dancehall norm and enact change. **TK**

Link www.kingstonlog.com
File Under Dancehall technology
RIYL Daft Punk, M.I.A., Santogold

Jennifer O'Connor

Here With Me (MATADOR)

Brooklyn songwriter Jennifer O'Connor's new album is so understated that it's almost too easy to take for granted how good she is at what she does. Her guitar playing is decidedly straightforward, and she certainly isn't one to belt it out to the cheap seats, but both instruments are packed with simple yet affecting melodies. Her lyrics are plainly stated ("We'd lie on your bed and talk

for hours"), yet indelibly scene-setting and moving. Alternating between solo cuts and songs featuring a restrained backing band, O'Connor moves through 12 songs of love and anguish with a grace that could be a detriment—though it would be the listeners' loss if they ignored her because she makes fantastic songwriting look effortless.

Michael Toder

Link www.jenniferconnor.net
File Under Easy like Sunday morning
RIYL Neko Case, Cat Power, Joni Mitchell

Okkervil River

The Stand Ins (JAGJAGUWAR)

Ever wondered who puppeteered the radiant hand on the cover of Okkervil River's 2007 opus, *The Stage Names*? It's this boney guy right here. Instead of producing what was originally intended to be a double album, OR crafted two separate groups of songs, with *The Stand Ins* as the sequel—and the behind-the-scenes expedition—to

Stage. But unlike the skeletal pictorial, the latest from band leader Will Sheff and company fleshes out the raw, Austin indie rock sound previously found in OR compositions. With poetics still conjuring images of loss, substance use and abuse, and self-deprecating womanizing, *Stand Ins* saunters ambitiously through the depths of the night amidst the clash of acoustic guitars and iconic cabaret Wurliizers. **LM**

Link www.okkervilriver.com
File Under Offstage skeletons
RIYL Sunset Rubdown, Shearwater, Fleet Foxes

Paramount Styles

Failure American Style

(TOUCH AND GO)

After a number of ups and downs with Baltimore's onetime "it" art-punks, Girls Against Boys singer-guitarist Scott McCloud has finally gone the solo route, starting with this acoustic-pop debut that takes a 180 from his



Jennifer O'Connor

Photo: John VonPamier

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Lee "Scratch" Perry

earlier roots. Though the dark Lou Reed vibe certainly lives on—from his too-cool sing-speak to the tragicomic tales of drugs and fame—what really registers is McCloud's virtual nosedive into everything soft and poppy. The drums hang back on jaunty tracks like "Paradise Happens" and "Hollywood Tales 2," making way for his barely-there vocals and acoustic grooves. There are some sappy tracks ("These Starry Nights" sounds more like Train-

inspired soft rock), but they don't obscure the strong stuff.

Kasi Kangaroo

Link www.myspace.com/paramountstylesnyc
File Under Soft machine
RIYL The Verve, Lou Reed, The Wallflowers

Lee "Scratch" Perry
Repentance (NARNACK)
The backbone of Lee "Scratch" Perry's 54th studio album is the

traditional reggae rhythms and chill-out vocals that have defined his sound over the years. But this time it is drenched in sharp, electronic effects, fast-driving beats and production by Perry's good friend Andrew W.K. The eclectic mix of influences keeps Perry pumping out tracks that are fresh and club-ready. Though sprinkled with breathy, sexual vocals by adult entertainer Sasha Grey, *Repentance*, seems to ask for mercy through Christian

motifs on tracks like "God Save His King" and "Reggae Man," the latter beginning with a recitation of the prayer "Our Father." Recording technologies may have changed for "The Upsetter," but his legendary innovation lives on.
Liz Pelly

Link www.myspace.com/leescratchperry
File Under Father figure
RIYL Spank Rock, M.I.A., Bob Marley

Pierre De Reeder

The Way That It Was (LITTLE RECORD COMPANY)

On his first solo outing, Pierre De Reeder—Rilo Kiley's bassist—epitomizes a neo-easy listening. From the album's opener, "Shame On Love," to its twangy, horn-infused eponymous track, *The Way That It Is* flows effortlessly through each of its 11 cuts. But De Reeder can't take all the credit. Besides being backed by RK band mates Jenny Lewis, Blake Sennet and Jason Boesel, De Reeder also seems to borrow liberally from the biggies that have come before him. "Sophia's Song" sounds like a modern take on Billy Joel's "Vienna." And the album's reverential theme is continued with "This Foolish Heart," a kind of spin-off from Elvis' "Love Me Tender." Très bien, Pierre! **Charlotte Benbeniste**

Link www.pierredereeder.com
File Under Nice and easy
RIYL Billy Joel, The Sea And The Cake, Jason Collett

Sebastien Tellier

Sexuality (RECORD MAKERS)

Sebastien Tellier's newest electro odyssey may long to be a thoughtful meditation on sexuality, but it's just as much a mechanical exploration in vintage atmosphere. *Sexuality* is assembled from '80s synthesizers and drum machines, all accented by spacey electro hooks in the vein of Air. But the real delight is in Tellier's tight, hypnotic songwriting. France's representative in the 2008

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The Uglysuit

Eurovision Song Contest can sure write a mean pop song ("Divine," "Look"). Yet even when the sexual camp is maxed out, there's something mournful about the whole affair. *Sexuality's* amorous ambience may be heightened by orgasmic moans and Tellier's breathy vocals, but by "L'Amour Et La Violence," it's hard to ignore the record's deeper sense of loss. **77**

Link www.sebastientellier.com

File Under Sexual healing

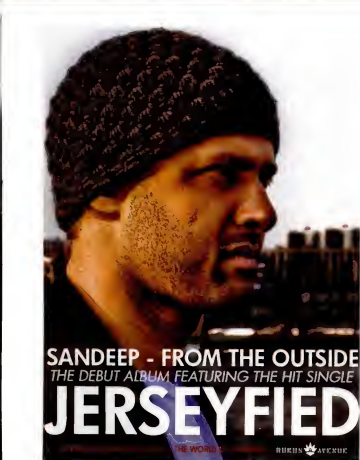
RIVL Air, Daft Punk, Candle Light

Emiliana Torrini

Me And Armini (ROUGH TRADE)

Icelandic singer Emiliana Torrini Davidóttir's spectral voice has been heard sporadically on film and television. But her third proper stateside album is a minimalist oeuvre that shines like a beacon of light slicing through a thick layer of storm clouds—a solitary

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THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

Keep The Babies Warm

New album from the power-pop supergroup that includes former members of the Wannabes, Cher U.K., Dumptruck and Spoon, following quickly on the heels of their Spring '08 release *Limited Coverage*, arguably the finest piece of Bolshevik Psychedelia this country has ever produced. The band seeks to convert musical consumers of all stripes as the well-heeled, slick sound of this new set niftily conceals the band's ideological message and slyly indoctrinates new adherents to the cause, delivering adamant everyday anthems with style, charisma andchutzpah.



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Emiliana Torrini

shimmering pillar visible in the darkness. Electro-trippy bubbles rise and fall on the title track, while the dominating instrument in "Ha Ha" is Torrini's unparalleled vocal, audible here in a breathy downbeat, a haunting sonic accomplishment that makes hair stand on end. Amidst the wildly otherworldly voice that tugs at heartstrings and the slow-breathing near-death whisper lie carefree tracks, like

cheery "Big Jumps" and the speedy "Jungle Drums," which showcase her far-reaching musical talent. **LN**

Link www.emilianatorrini.com
File Under Emporio Armani
RIYL Björk, Múm, Portishead

James Jackson Toth
Waiting in Vain (RYKODISC)
 After years with freak-folk group Wooden Wand, Toth's

first solo record is 49 minutes of wistful, whimsical, though methodically sparse alt-country. The arrangements are spare and crisp, marked by an occasional slide guitar, which leaves room for Toth's emotive baritone—and his occasionally theatrical, sometimes surreal musings on redemption. Characters from Faust to Blake's Beulah populate landscapes like the River Styx and the "telephone zone." Despite the histrionics, the rural leanings are front and center. With the help of vocal arranger (and wife) Jessie Lynn, *Waiting* seems almost unbearably real. By the final nervous, soaring solo of the seven-minute-plus "The Dome," Toth has made it clear he's managed to sidestep the freak-folk tag in style. **TT**

Link www.jamesjacksontoth.com
File Under Freak-folk sidestep
RIYL Wilco, Jackson Browne, Rolling Stones

The Uglysuit

The Uglysuit (QUARTERSTICK/TOUCH AND GO)

This sextet of early twenty-somethings makes its mark with a debut that is at once grungy and effervescent. A careful layering of languid vocals amidst bright, bouncy melodies paired with a heavy artillery of versatile instrumentation, the album certainly flares the imagination. However, the nine-song LP sometimes gets a bit too carried away for its own good. Ambitious if ambling tracks "...And We Became Sunshine" and "Everyone Now Has A Smile" each clock in at a daunting seven-plus minutes. Like their fellow Oklahoma City residents, the Flaming Lips, these lads attempt to bring out the shiny, happy side of rock, but still have a way to go. **Kaitlyn Piccol**

Link www.myspace.com/theuglysuit
File Under Shiny happy people
RIYL The Shins, Iron And Wine, Wilco

Photo: Kristina Ingmarsson

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Replacements

Tim, Pleased To Meet Me, Don't Tell A Soul, All Shook Down

(RHINO)

This second batch of Replacements reissues this year covers the Minneapolis ragged rock 'n' roll heroes' latter albums that have always polarized fans, but have oddly become perhaps the most commercially influential. Ask emo kids who namedrop the 'Mats, and infuriatingly they'll most likely only have heard *Don't Tell A Soul* (1989). *Tim*, (1985) despite still simmering harrumphs about Tommy (Ramone) Erdelyi's production, is the band's best all-around album. And it only gets better with the bonus tracks, including early versions of "Can't Hardly Wait" and an absolutely blistering demo of "Kiss Me On The Bus," which will make 35-plus fans feel that first spark all over again. The rough demos and alternate versions on *Pleased To Meet Me* (1987) hint at a more scraggly record that diehards might've preferred. But the bigger production at that point in their career—guitarist Bob Stinson had died, and the band was feeling the wear of the road—does clear some cobwebs and makes the near-filler tunes sound more explosive.

With some time passed, the last two albums hold up for their melancholy songwriting. *Don't Tell A Soul* was the classic example of a band getting hyped right at it's peak (*Tim*); then when the major label machine finally gloms on—phoning in desperate pleas to come up with a hit while the band is touring more than ever—the original spunk is sunk, which, of course leads to a limp record right when the hit-fueled masterpiece is supposed to drop. "I'll Be You" was the closest the Mats came to successfully grafting radio-ready pop to Westerberg's rocking, if somber, soul. The cool demos and scruffy Slade cover added here salvage the band's weakest effort. The band finally skulked out *All Shook Down* (1990), which was essentially a Westerberg solo record, and a sullen, muted one at that, but also featured some of his most heart-wrenching tunes. It's regarded as something of a lost classic by the alt-country set, and the loads of creaky, mostly one-man demos appended here will only cement that rep. The remastering on all four is fine, and the liner notes are packed with the kind of fond remembrances true 'Mats fans love. There aren't kudos enough to Rhino for reintroducing this classic band with all eight reissues. **Eric Davidson**

Sebadoh

Bubble And Scrape

(DOMINO)

Following the recent reissue of *Sebadoh III*, comes this remastered reissue, packed with many extra demos and an info-rich booklet, of the third album from the guys who defined gawkish indie rock wrapped in cut 'n' paste artwork. On the original 1993 album, the slacker scum of earlier releases gives way to a crankier mood, purportedly due to band dissent, but also to each band member having more equal songwriting say. Hence this is a more diverse record structurally, and somewhat clearer production-wise. It's interesting to notice what passed for sonically cranky in indie rock then, given its many and mangled sub-sects since. **Eric Davidson**

Ego Summit

The Room Isn't Big Enough

(OLD 3C)

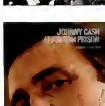
Just as bloggers drop noddie nods to Columbus, Ohio's "shitgaze" scene, this reissue of a loopy landmark in Columbus' lo-fi history was recently released into the night via the tiny capital city label, Old 3C. It originally came out vinyl-only in 1997 on Mike Rep's Old Age/No Age imprint. Rep being the cat who basically created the concept of fuck dance/let's scrunch indie rock for C-town 'round the early '70s (and still sometimes pro-douches regionals like Times New Viking). Here he gathered with other ground-peeking grand-uncles of the Columbus scene to create a squelch of their sounds in a dank barn. Don Howland (Bassholes) morphs Ron House's "Half Off" into a rat-shack booze rant. Rep expels beatnik demons. House (Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments) spreads his lurid lines in a more lulled humor than usual. Guitars amble around crumbling corners, Ohio winter ghosts drunk-stumble throughout, and each guy usually half-laugh as the songs tumble to mostly bleak endings. Or as Jim Shepard (sadly no longer with us) says in "Illogical," the catchiest song here, "Some of this just doesn't make sense." A film of "Ya had to be there" covers this rec—locals thought it all a darker than expected dump onto the sizzling scene of the time. It feels now like the more interestingly bruised pops of the kids pulverizing their Pere Ubu preferences at C-town dives tonight. **Eric Davidson**

Johnny Cash At Folsom Prison: Legacy Edition

Johnny Cash

COLUMBIA

Already revered as one of the top live recordings in music history, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison: Legacy Edition*, finally gives us the full story of that career defining day with a double-disc, expanded version. The previously unreleased "Opening Announcements" transcend you straight back to that dingy, stonewall prison in the winter of 1968. Also included for the first time are stellar performances by country legends Carl Perkins and The Statler Brothers. By the time Cash gives his signature greeting, the Folsom inmates erupt in controlled madness. Cash's voice can melt the paint off of walls on songs like "I Still Miss Someone" and "The Wall." All throughout, Cash and the inmates often feed off of each other's energy, showcased when Cash gives producer Bob Johnston the theoretical finger by telling the crowd "This show is being recorded for an album release on Columbia Records and you can't say hell or shit or anything like that." The highlight of the show is the gut-wrenching one-two punch of "Cocaine Blues" and "25 Minutes To Go," where Cash sounds as if he is confessing his crimes to the criminals. Disc two offers the second show in its entirety and includes an amazing duet with wife June Carter, "Long-Legged Guitar Pickin' Man." The DVD is chock full of goodies that include a riveting documentary on Cash and the historic lock-up, current interviews with country royalty Merle Haggard and Rosanne Cash, plus ex-inmates who were on lockdown that cold January day. **Tom Duffey**



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WHEELS OF
NEW LONDON
Powers of New London, V4
Emeralds Domain

The Rock Bible: Unholy Scripture For Fans And Bands

by Henry Owings (QUIRK BOOKS)

Henry Owings has made, well, not a living, but at least a semi-professional pastime out of making snide commentary on indie rock. As publisher of *Chunklet*, he has listed the biggest assholes in music and documented the most overrated artists and records. Now he has published what he hopes will be the definitive scripture on the subject, one that will "(find) its way into the glove compartments of all touring bands' vans and/or buses."

With a structure loosely based on the original good book, *The Rock Bible* is divided into gospels relating to the different roles in a band. Within each, Owings has assembled pointers and truisms only partially tongue-in-cheek. For example, ordinance 38 from "The Gospel According To The Drummer," commands, "No drum gloves. If you can't hold on to drumsticks, you may want to rethink the 'playing' part of playing drums." Of course, drummers are an easy target, but you get the idea.

The Rock Bible is filled with the savage wit and insightful humor that has long made *Chunklet* an indispensable read. Whether the book actually weathers the centuries is questionable, but it will be around much longer than those who do not heed its advice.

STEPHEN SLAYBAUGH



New York Dolls: Photographs By Bob Gruen

(ABRAMS IMAGE)

After years of music industry work and general nice guy around the Bowery scene-ness, legendary rock photographer, Bob Gruen, has recently flung open his vaults, specifically the ones marked "New York Dolls." First there was the DVD, *All Dolled Up* (MVD), an amazing collection of über-rare films Gruen took during the Dolls' early-'70s pre-punk heyday at shows throughout the East Coast and during their lone trip to California. A jaw-dropping release for fans, it also included in its extras many still photos. But lest you think this is just a book form of that, be assured there was much, much more where that came from. Aside from the endless color and B&W live, TV appearance and candid backstage/hangin' around pics, Gruen also shot many posed press photos and made a short film (stills herein) as an introduction for a famed Valentine's Day concert in 1974. Besides the snazzy padded pink cover and all those way cool snapshots of the time, Gruen got written commentary and quotes from Morrissey, Legs McNeil (*Please Kill Me*) and Debbie Harry, as well as interviews with surviving Dolls David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain. For all the Dolls' decadent glamour and gutter gushing, the book does a serviceably subtle job of proving that they—as opposed to so many exclusionary Big Apple scene creators since—were basically five friends just trying to sneak everyone in the back door of rock 'n' roll's caboose.

ERIC DAVIDSON



Radio Silence: A Selected Visual History Of American Hardcore Music

By Nathan Nedorostek and Anthony Pappalardo (MTV PRESS)

When it comes to books about genres of music, it tends to be a bunch of words strung along for pages on end that read like an encyclopedia, full of facts but short on emotion. The problem here is that most of the authors of these books have just done a bunch of research instead of actually living the scene or being involved in the music about which they are writing. That's why *Radio Silence: A Selected Visual History Of American Hardcore Music* shines so brightly through the dark valley of the music book Britannicas. Co-author Anthony Pappalardo is as justified as any to write about the topic of hardcore music and the DIY style that was beginning to form, having played in such hardcore bands as In My Eyes and Ten Yard Fight. Pappalardo, along with co-author Nathan Nedorostek, give a riveting look into the scene with a grand display of more than 500 shots of rare photographs, t-shirts, records, letters and other memorabilia from the time when punk was dead and hair metal was at its height. Many of the bands portrayed here are your typical hardcore heroes, ranging from Black Flag and Bad Brains to Agnostic Front and Big Boys, but the book also dives deep into the reason these bands and this whole monumental music movement was forming in the first place. *Radio Silence* is a must own for anyone who was into the hardcore scene and anyone interested in learning about it, plus you just might see an old picture of yourself in all your sweaty glory before you sold out and got a job.



TOM DUFFY

Things The Grandchildren Should Know

by Mark Oliver Everett (THOMAS DUNNE BOOKS)

The autobiography by Eels' mastermind Mark Oliver Everett begins with him finding the recently deceased body of his emotionally distant father. It would seem that there's nowhere to go but up from such an opener. But as *Grandchildren* progresses, Everett deals with both his mother's battle with cancer and his sister's battle with depression. It's to Everett's credit that he handles harrowing losses like this, much less (in comparison) minor annoyances like clueless record label executives, with an even-handed touch that keeps the reader from feeling bogged down by the weight of tragedy. Instead, he details how music provided an outlet that allowed him to process his grief and eventually feel joy again. The writing in *Grandchildren* is clearly cut from the same straightforward, perceptive and empathic cloth that has characterized Eels' output for more than a decade now, and he makes it clear that he would be the last person to wallow in despair. In fact, when he's not detailing his emotional estrangement from his genius father (a physicist who devised the influential parallel universe theory) and his sister's descent into drugs and self-abuse, Everett is one funny guy. From early juvenile delinquency, ("We brushed the dirt off ourselves, she pulled up her pants, and we were escorted to the principal's office where I was suspended for the second time in ninth grade") to the weird vagaries of fame ("I looked down to see Lollapalooza founder Perry Farrell in the front row. He looked up at me and said it again. 'I KNOW YOU'RE BATMAN.' All these years later, I'm still not sure why I'm Batman.") Everett recounts the ups and downs of a life formed and repeatedly saved by music.

MICHAEL TEDDER





Daft Punk: Electroma (DAFT ARTS / WILDBUNCH)

Despite Daft Punk's best efforts in translating their message to the big screen, the final product and the duo's first venture into feature-length film falls short. *Electroma* is the story of two robots, played by Peter Hurteau and Michael Reich respectively, longing to escape their silent and insipid robot world to become human. The film is loaded with hyperbolic messages and half-baked metaphors as the robots literally undergo "plastic" surgery, are persecuted for their differences, and are left with no one but each other on whom to rely. Moreover, the lack of dialogue creates a need to film every moment of the story, perhaps lending itself to the robots' desire to escape the monotony, but more often infuriating its viewers.

Even with the shortcomings of this taciturn plot, the film finds some redemption in its cinematography and soundtrack. *Electroma* is filled with shots of the California desert so breathtaking that you may forgive the unwarranted length of the scenes, and is matched with music from the likes of Todd Rundgren, Brian Eno and Curtis Mayfield, as epic as we knew Daft Punk could deliver. Neither absolves the film, however for the film or music lover it certainly makes it easier to swallow. **LOTTE AGULLÓ COLLINS**



Awake, My Soul: The Story of The Sacred Harp (AWAKE PRODUCTIONS)

Seven years in the making, *Awake My Soul: The Story Of The Sacred Harp* takes viewers on a trip down the dusty roads of the deep South for a riveting look at a form of a cappella known as "Sacred Harp singing." The music, which originated in rural churches 200 years ago, relies on "The Sacred Harp," a 160-year-old hymnal built entirely around notes. Filmmakers Matt and Erica Hinton, both Sacred Harp singers themselves, give a full overview of the unusual singing style with interviews with some of the earliest known Harp singers and teachers, along with a newer generation that is trying to revive the unknown art form. Though sometimes the subjects in the documentary come across almost cult-like, their hospitality and southern charm can warm up even the coldest of hearts. Fans of alt-country music might find the gruffy southern drawl of the narrator familiar, as it is that of Americana hero Jim Lauderdale. Chances are, the audience that will be drawn to this DVD will already be somewhat familiar with shape note singing and its long storied history. However, anyone interested in early American music should also take the time to throw it on for an hour to get a true music lesson. **TOM DUFFY**



Ladies And Gentlemen The Fabulous Stains (RHINO)

This grimy ill' 1981 drama was rarely screened when it was quasi-released, had very sporadic cable sightings in the early '80s, was never available on VHS or DVD (until now), and even some cast members (including a 15-year-old Diane Lane and Laura Dern at 13) didn't have copies of it. The basic plot—three runaway teen girls form a band and land on tour with a British punk group—would seem to have been trendy for the time, but not if played as an extremely bleak, rain-soaked slog through the backroads of Appalachia on the way to a sad comment about trying to follow your dreams. It's been credited with birthing the Riot Grrrl movement; Nirvana planned to cover the soundtrack; and it may be from where the White Stripes got their name. But upon its release, it was tossed off as a cheap, head-scratching media critique at best from the director of Cheech and Chong's *Up In Smoke*. As director Allison Anders (*Gas, Food, Lodging, The L Word*) says in the fine liner notes, she didn't get it either when she first saw it, and that even the presence of two Sex Pistols and Paul Simonon (*The Clash*) in the main cast didn't grab the attention of her L.A. scene pals. Seems the story was already passé for '81, probably because it wasn't 1993 yet. It's almost spooky how much the Stains and their hoards of pre-pubescent femme-fans mirrored Bikini Kill et al's *raison d'être*. The Cassevetes directing an *ABC After School Special* vibe probably doomed its commercial chances, but fits the film perfectly, as this is one of the most true depictions of the drab, everyday grind of low-rent rock touring ever put to film. There are hilariously sad moments from Fee Waybill (*The Tubes*) and the amazing Brit actor Ray Winstone, great songs throughout, and a nagging sense that Lane has really sold herself short over the years. Or it could be that no one offers good roles to women over 25 anymore (or under for that matter), and the dour outlook of *The Fabulous Stains* has since become prescient in yet another way.

The USA Network ordered a "happier" ending for the cable TV edit (featuring an MTV-style video of the Stains in snazzier day-glo suits), filmed and tacked on two years after the *Stains* was released, and used here. It would've been nice to offer both endings on this DVD release. But the commentary from Lane and Dern is extremely touching, as they recall minute details and utter 28-year-old dialog ahead of the characters. And director Lou Adler's... commentary provides more details, great for the obsessive fans of *Stains*. **ERIC DAVIDSON**



The Beach Boys And The Satan (MYD VISUAL)

It's more than a little difficult to capture the entire scope of The Beach Boys' career in a one hour documentary—it's impossible. But the folks at MYD have got the tone, even if the content's not all there. From the rise of surf music to the LSD-fueled nightmare recording sessions of *Smiley Smile*, *The Beach Boys And The Satan* covers a broad swathe of cultural material, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that the film's a little meandering. Interview sessions with Brian Wilson at the piano and a dreadlocked, poolside Don Wau are highlights in the documentary, originally produced for German TV in 1996 (given away by the cool German title screens). It's on sale for the first time in more than 10 years, bringing together key figures from the surf movement and some rare archival footage to create something genuinely entertaining, even if the result is a little clumsy. Yes, the title is overbearingly sensationalist, and Satan doesn't appear half as much as you might expect (though Dennis Wilson's relationship with Charles Manson is a keystone piece). **TYLER THEOFILOS**

Radio Select Albums

PERIOD ENDING 9/25/08
WWW.CMJ.COM/MEDIAGUIDEPowered by
MediaGuide

TW	LW	ZW	PK	WKS	SPINS	ARTIST + TITLE	LABEL
1	1	1	1	14	284	BECK Modern Guilt	Interscope
2	3	2	2	8	250	CALEXICO Carried To Dust	Quarterstick-Touch And Go
3	7	3	9	17	220	FLEET FOXES Fleet Foxes	Sub Pop
4	9	4	4	9	208	CONOR OBERST Conor Oberst	Merge
5	8	7	5	7	204	OKKERVIL RIVER The Stand Ins	Jagjaguwar
6	6	12	2	22	203	COLDPLAY Viva La Vida Or Death And...	Capital
7	2	10	2	6	199	WALKMEN You And Me	Gigantic
7	12	9	2	22	199	MY MORNING JACKET Evil Urges	ATO
9	11	15	5	11	191	RATATAT LP3	XL
10	10	5	5	7	177	STEREDLAB Chemical Chords	4AD
11	36	—	11	2	174	CHARLIE HADEN Rambling Boy	Ocecca
11	5	8	3	13	174	OR. DOG Fate	Park The Van
13	4	8	1	25	170	DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE Narrow Stairs	Atlantic
14	28	41	14	4	164	TV ON THE RADIO Dear Science	Interscope
15	18	13	13	6	160	MICHAEL FRANTI... All Rebel Rockers	Anti
16	20	17	15	10	156	DELTA SPIRIT Ode To Sunshine	Rounder
17	22	24	17	5	150	FUJIYA AND MIYAGI Lightbulbs	Deaf Omb And Blind
18	17	18	14	7	144	BEN FOLDS Way To Normal	Epic
18	15	14	14	5	144	RA RA RIOT The Rhumb Line	Barsuk
20	13	11	2	16	143	HOLD STEADY Stay Positive	Vagrant

Important: In order for your music to be eligible for appearance on CMJ RADIO SELECT ALBUMS, you must service Mediaguide with all albums, EPs and singles (including remises and edits). Please visit the "Submit Music" tab of www.musicmonitor.com or www.ccmj.com/airplaymanager and follow the instructions for submission.

RADIO
Top Five

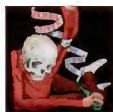
Calexico



Ra Ra Riot



TV On The Radio



Okkervil River



Walkmen

Top 200

PERIOD ENDING 9/30/08
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS THIS WEEK: 392VIEW AIRPLAY REPORTS IN THEIR ENTIRETY
AT WWW.CMJ.COM/WMR/AIRPLAY

TW	LW	ZW	PK	WKS	ARTIST + TITLE	LABEL
1	35	—	1	2	TV ON THE RADIO Dear Science	Interscope
2	3	3	2	7	CALEXICO Carried To Dust	Touch And Go-Quarterstick
3	1	2	1	7	OKKERVIL RIVER The Stand Ins	Jagjaguwar
4	4	5	4	7	RA RA RIOT The Rhumb Line	Barsuk
5	2	1	1	7	WALKMEN You And Me	Gigantic
6	8	8	6	5	BROKEN WEST Now Or Heaven	Merge
7	6	10	6	5	CHAD VANGAALAN Soft Airplane	Sub Pop
8	—	—	8	1	JENNY LEWIS Acid Tongue	Warner Bros.
9	14	—	9	2	BLITZEN TRAPPER Furr	Sub Pop
10	5	4	1	13	BECK Modern Guilt	Interscope
11	7	11	7	6	FUJIYA AND MIYAGI Lightbulbs	Deaf Omb And Blind
12	109	—	12	2	KINGS OF LEDN Only By The Night	RCA
13	12	16	12	8	STILLS Oceans Will Rise	Arts And Crafts
14	11	12	11	6	LYKKE LI Youth Novels	LL
15	9	6	6	8	STEREDLAB Chemical Chords	4AD
16	39	—	16	2	OUNGEN 4	Kernade
17	20	33	17	4	SHUGO TDKUMARU Exit	P-Vine
18	30	92	18	3	NOAH AND THE WHALE Peaceful...	Cherry Tree-Interscope
19	—	—	19	1	TBACCOK Fucked Up Friends	Anticon
20	15	15	6	9	BRAZILIAN GIRLS New York City	Varve Forecast
21	25	—	21	2	PORTUGAL THE MAN Carcass...	Equal Vision
22	21	39	21	3	STARFUCKER Starfucker	Bedroom
23	22	29	22	4	AMANDA PALMER Who Killed Amanda Palmer	Roadrunner
24	13	9	3	10	CONOR OBERST Conor Oberst	Merge
25	10	7	7	7	HUMAN HIGHWAY Moody Motorcycle	Suicide Squeeze
26	32	30	26	4	DAMIAN JURADD Caught In The Trees	Secretly Canadian
27	19	25	19	5	GIANT SAND ProVISIONS	Yap Rec
28	17	14	2	11	CSS Conkey	Sub Pop
29	16	13	7	9	THE FAINT Fascination	Blank.sxw
30	51	—	30	2	SECRET MACHINES The Secret Machines	World's Fair
31	33	20	1	17	FLEET FOXES Fleet Foxes	Sub Pop
32	29	19	15	12	RATATAT LP3	XL
33	44	66	33	3	BRIAN WILSON That Lucky Old Sun	Capital
34	34	45	34	3	DEAD CONFEDERATE Wrecking Ball	The Artists Organization
35	18	17	3	11	BLACK KIDS Partie Traumatic	Almost Gold-Columbia
36	24	24	24	6	MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD All Rebel Rockers	Anti
37	23	28	23	5	DRESSY BESSY HOLLERandSTOMP	Transdreamer
38	67	—	38	2	THESE UNITED STATES Crimes	United Interests
39	46	—	39	2	MINIATURE TIGERS Tell It To The Volcano	Modern Art
40	48	—	40	2	DLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW Tennessee Pusher	Network
41	71	—	41	2	ANI DIFRANCO Red Letter Year	Righteous Babe
42	52	—	42	2	MOTHER MOTHER O My Heart	Last Gang
43	42	32	3	14	SIGUR ROS Med Sud 1 Eyrum Vid Spilum Endalaust	XL
44	27	27	27	5	KIMYA DAWSON Alphabutt	K
45	37	40	37	4	TALKDEMONIC Eyes At Half Mast	Arene Rock
46	40	52	40	3	MASDN PROPER City Oxen Free	Oxevocate
47	63	—	47	2	JDLIE HOLLAND The Living And The Dead	Anti
48	36	36	36	4	CHEMICAL BROTHERS Brotherhood	Astralwerks
49	28	18	7	9	OXFORD COLLAPSE Bits	Sub Pop
50	59	130	50	3	PASSION PIT Chunk Of Change	Frenchkiss

SOUNDS FROM SPAIN

HERE COME THE SPANIARDS

After delivering beats, riffs and paella in SXSW last March, Sounds from Spain returns to the US. In our first appearance at the CMJ Music Marathon, we are bringing to New York an awesome selection of Spanish indie artists. *Ace of Clubs*, on Wednesday October 22nd at 7.00 p.m., and The Annex, on October 24th at 1.00 p.m., are the places and the time, and these are the six bands that will be there to boost your concept of Spanish music to another level. New York: get louder!

Israel Marco and Daniel Dominguez are *Cuchillo*, one of this year's surprising newcomers in the Spanish indie stage. Somewhere between the German Out-Rock and the West Coast psychedelic folk, *Cuchillo* builds songs linking guitars loops and harmonic voices, combined with drums and rhythms that give shape to a minimal and intense result.



Depedro is the most personal project of Jairo Zavala, singer and guitar player with a long career behind him in other bands. His music is a mixture of latin, border fusion, folk, african music, reggae and blues. The lyrics talk to us directly, making us think about what is going on in the world and inviting us to look into ourselves.



The Right Ons is a creature arisen from effluvium and corporal liquids exuded by The Faces, Sly and Family Stone, Marvin Gaye, MC5, Run DMC or The JB's. Apart from the many concerts on their own in clubs, beaches, and biker parties, they have been the supporter band of Bellairs, Diamond Dogs, and Mando Diao. This last summer, they recorded their first CD: 80.81.



We Are Standard is a band with the golden ticket to the chocolate factory of success. With festival performances in Germany's Popkomm, dates in Holland, France, and Belgium; and a chock-a-block Austin show at SXSW, not only are they adapting their studio sound into a live onslaught, but they're also leaving diverse and international crowds raving about one thing: how they couldn't stop dancing. The new record is produced by Andy Gill of Gang of Four.



Underwater Tea Party is the perfect mix of the past, present and future of pop music. Zip Records released in the US its first record, *"Suburban Metronome"*, on January 8th. The second album, which has been mixed in Chicago by local legend John McEntire (Tortoise, The Sea and the Cake), is now ready to rock with a growing love for psychodelia, analog synths and "blurrier" sounds.



Aaron Thomas is an Australian singer songwriter who is currently residing in Madrid. His debut album *"Follow the Elephants"* has been received with great acclaim in every country where it has so far been released and live. In 2007, he and his band won the most prestigious prize for live bands in Spain, the Villa de Bilbao. His influences include Jeff Buckley, Radiohead, Paul Simon, Elvis Costello, Bob Dylan, The Beatles, and Camille.



Apart from the showcases, Sounds from Spain is organizing meetings for ten Spanish record labels, which will be holding interviews with American companies during the event. For more information: www.myspace.com/spainatcmj

CUCHILLO

THE RIGHT ONS

UNDERWATER
TEA PARTY

DEPEDRO

WE ARE STANDARD

AARON THOMAS





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